

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

ENCOURAGING THE STUDY OF OUR
FOUNDING DOCUMENTS BY
SCHOOL CHILDREN

HON. NEWT GINGRICH

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 4, 1998

Mr. GINGRICH. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a House Concurrent Resolution encouraging schools to dedicate at least one day of learning during the school year to studying the founding documents of our great nation: the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Federalist Papers.

These works establish the fundamental principles upon which the American experiment in government is based. They are the core that makes America unique and different from the rest of the world. In Europe, power was bestowed from God to the King who ruled the people. In this model, the center of power is the state. However, in the American model, power comes from God to the citizen who then lends it to the state. Self governance requires very hard work, patience, and persistence, but it also guarantees us freedom.

Further, I think it would be very healthy for every teacher and every student in America to spend time wrestling with the question. "What did the Founding Fathers mean by the term 'Creator'?" The Declaration of Independence states: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." I believe that when children start to realize that each and every person is endowed by God, then they begin to understand that if you sell them drugs, you are corrupting a person endowed by God. In fact, every violation of a person's unalienable rights is a violation of a Creator endowed right. I believe this understanding of our relationship with each other reorients the way we view each other in and the American body politic.

These are fundamental concepts which need to be reinforced for every child in America. I want to commend Senator Grace Kearns from Ohio, Senator Don Benton from Washington, Senator Colin Bonini from Delaware, Georgia Senator Chuck Clay, State Representative Andre Bauer from South Carolina, and Alabama Representative Bob McKee for introducing bills to implement this idea at the state level and Assemblyman Keith Olberg from California for getting a similar bill passed in California in 1996 requiring these documents to be specifically taught in high schools. I hope that my colleague in the House will join me in encouraging more study of the founding documents by American school children.

ISSUES OF CONCERN TO TODAY'S
YOUTH

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 4, 1998

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to have printed in the RECORD statements by high school students from my home state of Vermont, who were speaking at my recent town meeting on issues facing young people today. I am asking that you please insert these statements in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD as I believe that the views of these young people will benefit my colleagues.

STATEMENT BY ERICA LEWIS AND DAN
JOHNSON REGARDING DRUNK DRIVING

ERICA LEWIS: We would like to express a concern that is becoming a big issue with teen Vermonters today. Our concern is probably the same as many others: Teen driving under the influence of alcohol.

Young adults are usually both inexperienced drivers as well as inexperienced drinkers. These two combined is a fatality waiting to happen. Alcohol, when consumed, decreases alertness, causes depression, nausea, unconsciousness, hangovers, and possible overdose, which could lead to death. We, as teenagers, should be aware of the serious risks that are involved when wrong choices are made and lives are at stake. Driving should be considered a privilege, not a right, for we all have the right to be safe while driving, and when alcohol is involved, no one can predict the outcome. Anyone of us here today could be driving down the road next week and, because of a drunk driver, never make it to where we were headed. Because of this increasing problem, there needs to be more awareness of alcohol and its effects. It is up to us, the younger generation, to make an impression on our peers and those that follow, and most of all to prove to our elders that we have what it takes to make the right decisions and follow through.

There is no overall solution to this problem, but we, as mature young adults, should make a strong effort to plan ahead before it gets to a point where it might be too late, whether that be make arrangements for a designated driver or staying until you are capable of driving.

DAN JOHNSON: A suggestion that we have and strongly agree with is a paper called a contract for life. It is an agreement between teenagers and their parents stating, if at any given time that either they feel incapable of driving, there will be transportation provided, and safe transportation, for them. This contract was given to us from our drivers ed teachers at the Essex Technical Center. Other suggestions that we agree with is larger penalties for adults in furnishing alcohol for minors at stores to sell this. Teen drinking and driving will always be a problem, but, hopefully, with our help, we can reduce it. Thank you for our time.

Congressman SANDERS: A very important contribution to this discussion. Thanks very much.

STATEMENT BY JESSE FIELD, RENAY THOMPSON AND ELAINE GRIFFEN REGARDING CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

JESSE FIELD: Last year, every U.S. citizen committed 45 homicides. None of them were ever prosecuted. These crimes were planned out at least ten years in advance, and the victim not only knew about the coming execution, but was kept in prison the entire time. How, you may ask, can this happen. Well, the answer is, these crimes were legal.

You may realize by now what we are talking about: Capital punishment. You may also be saying, but these people were the scum of the earth, they don't deserve to live after what they did. This statement raises a serious moral question. But there are other reasons, as well, to abolish capital punishing: High costs, increased murder rates, and discrimination.

ELAINE GRIFFEN: Many people often argue it takes a lot of their tax dollars to keep an inmate locked up, and why should they have to pay so he or she can live? The truth is, it does cost them a lot. A study from 1997 found that it costs \$20,000 per year to keep a prisoner in jail. That's \$800,000 to lock them up for forty years. However, the same source found that it costs taxpayers \$2 million to execute someone. This is mostly because there are so many more appeals and Court costs attributed to an inmate on death row. So, in fact, taxpayers are not getting a break when they execute a criminal.

RENAY THOMPSON: Another common argument for the death penalty is capital punishment deters crime. This is not true at all. When a crime is committed, often the last thing on a potential criminal's mind is what consequences they will suffer as a result of this.

And as George Bernard Shaw says, "It is the deed that teaches, not the name we give it." Murder and capital punishment are not opposites that cancel one another, but similars that breed their kind. Studies done have shown that, as the number of executions increase, so does the murder rate. Georgia, which reinstated capital punishment in 1983, saw an increase of 20 percent in their murder rate in the following year, also a year in which the national homicide rate fell 5 percent. When Florida started executing prisoners again in 1979, the 1980 murder rate went up 28 percent, and 1981 and 1982 were the highest in recent history. These incidents show, as Michael Godfried put it, that the state may be, tragically, leading by example.

JESSE FIELD: Discrimination is also a major issue in sentencing and executions. Poor people cannot afford lawyers, and their defense is not as good. They are convicted and given the death penalty more often. There are also issues of racial discrimination involved. While only 12 to 13 percent of our nation's population is African-American, 41 percent of people on death row are black. A study done by the New Jersey Supreme Court shows there is strong evidence of racial bias in jurors. They are more likely to give the death penalties to minorities than whites. New Jersey is considering abolishing capital punishment on this issue alone, because it leads to a constitutional violation.

ELAINE GRIFFEN: Despite the strong case both points make against capital punishment, the most important issue by far is that of morals. For some people, it takes the

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

form of religion. For example, the brother of the woman who was murdered by Carla Fay Tucker is strongly against the death penalty for reasons of religion. He met with his sister's killer while she was on death row. He forgave her and she responded with tears and apologies. We killed this woman anyway. Bud Welch's daughter, Julie, died in the Oklahoma City bombing, and still he does not support the execution of Timothy McVay. He rejects legal murder for reasons of his religion, and also other moral issues such as the sanctity of life.

Another moral point that is important to make is the fact that we are trying to teach people that murder is wrong by committing it. By the logic of our government, we then killed and are wrong, and deserve to be killed as well.

RENNY THOMPSON: It is interesting to note that the United States is the only developed country that still uses the death penalty. Other countries in the same category with the U.S. on this issue are China, Iraq, India, North Korea, and Cuba, among others.

We would like to see a Federal abolition of capital punishment like the one from 1972 to 1976. As an alternative to the death penalty, we suggest life penalties without parole. These would be less costly, and the millions of dollars per prisoner saved could be reallocated into a fund to build a greater quantity of more secure prisons.

CONGRESSMAN SANDERS: That is an excellent presentation.

STATEMENT BY ALIA STAVRAND WOOLF
REGARDING CHARTER SCHOOLS

ALIA STAVRAND WOOLF: For the record, my name is Alia Stavrand Woolf. I am a ninth grader at the Gailer School.

All right. I used to go to the Shelburne Community School, and it wasn't working for me. Classes had no depth, and math was going agonizingly slowly. The only school work I enjoyed was my independent study. Students generally weren't allowed to broaden their studies. So students who already "got it" were asked to help the other students in the class learn the material.

Well, this sounds great in principle, and does work up to a point. But after a while, it got to me. Think about what it would be like if all day, every day, you had to watch Jeopardy reruns and you couldn't turn the TV off because, during the commercials, you were expected to explain the answers to your nextdoor neighbor.

I became a difficult student because I felt like I was wasting my time in school and not learning nearly as much as I could. By the end of fifth grade, my parents and I were pretty tired of trying to work within the system. When we moved to Charlotte that year, we decided it was time to look at what educational options were open. We asked the Charlotte public school if I could skip a grade so I could be more challenged in school. They said no. We considered home schooling, but both my parents work.

After a lot of looking, we found a private school in Middlebury called the Gailer School. It integrates different disciplines and incorporates independent study and community service. We met with the headmaster, and he actually talked with me, not to me, about what I wanted to learn. But private school tuition was not in the budget. I would have to start doing a lot more chores around the house, like all of the laundry, vacuuming, lawn mowing, taking care of my brother, a lot of work, so my mom could work more hours. I would also have to get on the bus at 7:00 a.m. to ride to Middlebury and wouldn't get home until 5:00 at night. This was no easy decision for my parents or for me.

Most public school classes are aimed at the average student. When you think about it, only one percent of students will be perfectly average. There are always special education classes, but not nearly so often are there advanced placement offerings.

All ends of the spectrum need to be addressed. A student should not have to go to private school to have their needs addressed, and it is mainly the elite who can choose an appropriate education for their child. Shouldn't there be the opportunity for all students to be challenged?

Students now come from as far south as Rutland, as far north as Fairfax, and as far east as Rochester to go the Gailer School in Middlebury. This should send a clear message to lawmakers that many students care so deeply about their education that they are willing to make significant sacrifices.

There is simply not enough scholarship money out there so that all students who want to can go to private school. Frequently, students start at private schools, but then have to drop out for financial reasons. While I am fortunate that my family has been able to send me to private school, it should not be only the economically elite who have access to alternative education.

I think a solution to this problem is federal legislation encouraging states to institute charter schools. Options would then open up for disadvantaged students. Because charter schools are still technically public schools, any student could go to the school of their choice. Students, like adults, need options; no school fits all students, just like no company is right for all workers.

In our free-market society, students need the best grade school education they can get, because they will have to compete for good colleges and jobs. I do not understand why our system of public schools is set up like a protectorate. It seems like more effort goes into maintaining the status quo than offering kids like me an excellent education.

Students deserve the opportunity to attend charter schools that are innovative and visionary. I see charter schools as an especially exciting opportunity for all students who are not average to have their talents appreciated and their interests encouraged. I love learning, and I learn best when I love my school.

Congressman SANDERS: Thank you very much for an excellent presentation.

A DEMOCRATIC TAIWAN WILL
CONTINUE TO FLOURISH

HON. ROBERT SMITH

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 4, 1998

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, during President Clinton's visit to China, President Clinton mentioned that the United States would not support Taiwan independence, the "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan" concepts and ROC's membership in organizations that require statehood.

Congress's reaction to Clinton's statement has been strong. The United States Senate passed a resolution 92-0 on July 10, reaffirming United States commitment to Taiwan in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act. A similar resolution passed the House by a 390-1 vote on July 21. On the same day, Taiwan Foreign Minister Jason Hu thanked the United States lawmakers for their friendship and support.

In Washington, in a press interview prior to Clinton's Shanghai statement on the three

no's, Taiwan Representative Stephen Chen said, "The Republic of China in 1998 is no longer the ROC of 1949. How many countries in the world can compare with the Republic of China in its development of freedom, democracy, equitable distribution of wealth and human rights? The Republic of China in 1998 will not be sacrificed by anyone." Chen expressed full confidence in Taiwan's future as long as the people in Taiwan rely upon themselves and adhere to the principles of full democratization. He concluded that a democratic Taiwan will continue to flourish.

Meanwhile President Lee Teng-hui has instructed the Foreign Ministry to evaluate the Clinton-Jiang summit's possible impact in the following areas: human rights, democracy, regional peace and stability, and further dialogue with the People's Republic of China on resolution of disputes between the two sides. On July 22, President Lee stated unequivocally that China must become unified. Unification, he said, must be under a system of democracy, freedom and equal prosperity to ensure the well being of the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD C. COLLINS
AND THE U.S. ARMED FORCES

HON. JERRY LEWIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, August 4, 1998

Mr. LEWIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the accomplishments of the United States Armed Forces, including Richard C. Collins, a World War II veteran of the United States Navy who resides in my congressional district in Yucca Valley, California. Mr. Collins served this nation honorably from October 1941 until the end of the war in 1945. While stationed at the Great Highway Loop Station near Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, he was a sonar man who helped ensure the safety of this Nation during the Pacific Campaign of World War II.

The work of Mr. Collins and the entire Armed Services during the War was admirable. It is my understanding that, while stationed in San Francisco, Mr. Collins was one of the men connected with breaking the Japanese intelligence code for the second time which enabled the Navy to interpret Japanese messages for the remainder of the War. This was a historically significant event as it helped put America on the course toward victory in the Pacific. Breaking the Japanese code helped shorten the War, thus saving thousands of American and Japanese lives. The efforts of the Navy and other services truly were heroic and all Americans are in their debt.

Being a citizen of the United States is a privilege that no one should take for granted. We all owe a great deal of gratitude and respect to the men and women of the Armed Forces who risk their lives every day to uphold the democratic principles of the United States and make this Nation safe. Without the service of men like Richard Collins and our other brave soldiers, America would not be the land of the free and we would not have the liberty that so many people around the world long for. Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join me in honoring Richard Collins and the entire Armed